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Scarlet Fever

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SCARLET FEVER

IS A

PREVENTABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Scarlet Fever and Scarlatina are different names
for the same disease.

This disease occurs in all degrees of severity, from the case so mild that it may not be suspected by the parents of the individual to the severe and rapidly fatal type. The mild cases may be the means of spreading the disease to someone else, who would develop the severe and fatal type, hence the necessity for the greatest care in quarantining all cases. Complications associated with Scarlet Fever such as ear trouble, mastoid, and kidney disease are always serious.

The common symptoms of Scarlet Fever are: sore throat, fever, vomiting and the scarlet rash, occurring the first day or two of the fever. Where fever exists, the throat should always be examined. If a combination of the above mentioned symptoms occur in a child, the doctor should be called at once. If the child is at school it should be sent home without delay. In some cases the rash may be very slight and not even noticed.

The disease is spread by discharges from the nose and throat of the sick person, in much the same way as colds would be spread. The germs of the disease are disseminated in the droplets of moisture, during the act of coughing or sneezing. The saliva would also contain the germs. Scarlet Fever may therefore be contracted by direct contact with the case, or object soiled with discharges from the patient, or by milk, contaminated either directly or indirectly by a patient. A discharging ear following Scarlet Fever may be the means of spreading the disease.

The public health regulations prohibit the supplying of milk or milk products from a place where Scarlet Fever exists, or taking from such place any milk containers or bottles, tickets, or money, during the period of quarantine.

Houses wherein a case of Scarlet Fever exists should be placarded with a card bearing the name of the disease and also the word "Quarantine."

No persons are allowed to leave quarantined premises or enter such premises except as provided by the public health regulations, and upon approval of the Medical Health Officer, and no articles of any kind should be taken from such premises.

The patient should be placed if possible in a room apart from the rooms occupied by other members of the family. The room is better without carpets, rugs, heavy curtains, or unnecessary furniture. Separate dishes must be kept for the use of patients and must be boiled each time after being used. Exclude all domestic pets such as dogs and cats.

No person, except the strictly necessary attendants, should be allowed to enter the sick room, and these should wear a cap and gown while in the room. The cap and gown should be made of material which can be boiled, and when the attendant has to leave the room these should be left inside. The hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water and rinsed in an antiseptic solution, immediately after every attention to the patient.

All discharges from the mouth and nose of the patient should be received in cloths, which should be burned at once.

The public health regulations require that quarantine shall be kept for at least four weeks, and such further time as is required to complete desquamation, and to clear up discharges from nose, ears and throat.

Release from quarantine can only be effected on order of the Medical Health Officer.

Of the contacts, the adult head of the family, and persons having previously had the disease, may be released, at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer, after a disinfecting bath, and change to fresh clothing. Children and adults who have not had the disease must be quarantined in a placarded house for seven days after the last exposure, and may then be discharged after a disinfecting bath and fresh clothing. A released person must not again enter the house until quarantine is lifted.

When the period of quarantine is over, the floors and woodwork of the rooms should be scrubbed with hot water and soap, walls rubbed down with a cloth, and the rooms well aired. Boil all bed clothes which can be boiled, and on blankets, quilts, pillows and mattresses, a solution of 10% formalin should be sprayed, and placed in a cupboard or box for six hours and then exposed to fresh air and sunlight.

Prevention

Scarlet Fever Toxin injected in five doses one week apart is used to produce immunity from Scarlet Fever. The "Dick" test is used to determine if immunity has been produced.

Treatment

In severe cases Scarlet Fever Antitoxin is now used, and it is also used for those contacts who have been directly exposed. This latter protects for only about 10 days.

These materials are supplied to physicians free, on request, from the Department of Public Health. Remember that early isolation may prevent an epidemic.